



## North Dakota Economic Security and Prosperity Alliance

**North Dakota Economic Security & Prosperity Alliance (NDESPA) Meeting  
Tuesday, October 21, 2014**

### **Draft Meeting Summary**

#### **Proposed Meeting Goals:**

- To reconvene in a spirit of collegiality and cooperation;
- To complete the revised strategic plan for NDESPA; and
- To receive partner updates and news of interest.

**Meeting Participants:** Kim Jacobson (ND County Social Service Directors Association), Stuart Savelkoul (ND United), Bridgit Maloni and Linda Isakson (CAWS ND), Penny Smith (Community Volunteer), Rhonda Styles-Rhode (Charles Hall Youth Services), Renee Stromme (ND Women's Network), Paul Griffin (Consensus Council) and Joey Kolosky (West River Head Start)

**Facilitated by:** The Consensus Council, Inc.

**Welcome, Introductions, Process Review and Organizational Updates:** NDESPA partners reviewed the consensus-based decision-making process and affirmed the ground rules for discussion. Partners were welcomed to the meeting and provided self-introductions along with program/organizational updates as follows:

- Kim shared information about efforts to meet with the Governor to request funding in his budget for Adult Protective Services (information that had previously been shared with NDESPA Partners); she noted that there is growing support for an effort to reduce property taxes by eliminating County Social Services (having these managed instead by the ND Department of Human Services – the County Social Service Directors are opposed to this plan and NDESPA supports their position. Kim also noted that such a merger is expressly not recommended in the recent study of behavioral health services in the state.
- Bridgit and Linda noted that the NDCAWS Board of Directors would meet in November to finalize legislative priorities that would likely include sexual violence prevention, firearms legislation and increases in services for victims in the Bakken region. Additional federal funds have come to North Dakota for shelter services as well as for training in the prevention of human trafficking. NDCAWS has taken positions against Initiated Ballot Measure #1 (“...inalienable right to life...”) and Measure #6 (Shared Parenting). Linda noted that the recent high visibility of domestic violence in the NFL has increased awareness of the subject nationwide. This has also translated to more calls for assistance to national and state hotlines. The NFL has made monetary donations to these hotlines, included \$19,000 to NDCAWS. Bridgit reminded NDESPA partners to

check out the new NDCAWS website: <http://www.ndcaws.org>. Bridgit has now completed her AmeriCorps VISTA Service – NDESPA Partners thanked her for her contributions and wished her well in her future endeavors!

- Penny has been working on projects from her home and indicated that she would consider some citizen advocacy/testimony roles during the legislative session particularly in the areas of early childhood and youth issues, and/or mental health.
- Renee reported on the work of the NDWN and others in regard to opposition to Initiated Measures #1 and 6 and shared that there would be several high visibility press conferences and events in the days leading up to the election. The NDWN will work to prioritize their legislative agenda following the election and based upon election results. Renee reminded NDESPA Partners of the upcoming statewide FUSE Summit (November 13-14 at the Bismarck Civic Center) and encouraged all who are interested to register (only \$30!) as soon as possible: <http://www.projectfuse.org>.
- Stuart shared that ND United is seeking a full-time Professional Development Director: <http://ndunited.org/careers/>. They just completed the annual Instructional Conference (aka Teachers Convention) that saw very low attendance numbers. Stuart noted that this is due, in no small part, to teachers no longer receiving paid days for this professional development opportunity. He noted that ND United has taken opposition positions on Initiated Measures #3 and #4. They are in the process of prioritizing legislative actions that include salary and benefits for members, assuring rights for long time “temporary” workers and adjunct higher education faculty, opposition to corporate tax reductions/lowering of the extraction tax and partnering to improve early childhood services. There is presently a sound legislative bill coming from the interim Education Committee that will need to be closely monitored as it makes its way through the legislative process.
- Paul shared information about the Money Follows the Person (MFP) Supportive Housing Development Collaborative meetings being held across the state, facilitated by the Consensus Council. The MFP Initiative works to transition people from institutional (ND State Hospital, Developmental Center, nursing homes and group homes) into community-based services. He also shared information related to the Housing Alliance of ND (HAND) that is becoming activated to prepare for the legislative session (meeting scheduled for 10/30/14). Paul also shared information from his prior work in the statewide Guardianship program as it relates to end-of-life decision-making and Initiated Measure #1.
- Rhonda noted that Charles Hall Youth Services (CHYS) has had to temporarily close one of its homes due to lack of sufficient staff to provide services. She noted, and other NDESPA Partners concurred, that workforce shortages are one of the biggest challenges facing organizations in North Dakota. Combined with fairly low salaries and no/modest benefits, it is extremely difficult to recruit and retain for any position - skilled, unskilled, paraprofessional or professional. It is hoped that additional appropriations will be in the Governors budget for legislative consideration in the 2015 session.
- Joey asked everyone to note that Jay Watson (West River Head Start Policy Council member & Parent of the Year) was recently honored with/awarded the National Head Start Association Parent of the Year, competing with nominees from 12 other regions: [http://bismarcktribune.com/lifestyles/hometown/about-town---oct/article\\_d752bfea-5adb-11e4-81d8-eb65f6b67178.html](http://bismarcktribune.com/lifestyles/hometown/about-town---oct/article_d752bfea-5adb-11e4-81d8-eb65f6b67178.html). Joey also noted that Head Start is having great

difficulty recruiting teachers due to low salary and general workforce shortages. There is collaborative work being done with the ND Head Start Association to identify legislative priorities and strategies that would benefit Head Start programs statewide.

**Report on CFED Assets & Opportunities Learning Conference:** Renee Stromme reported on her attendance at the annual conference and suggested that there is more that NDESPA could do to improve college savings accounts (In spite of having a good program in ND). Renee and Rose Stoller will research available information and report back to the NDESPA Partners at the next meeting. Renee has begun by contacting the ND Department of Human Services to request that they consider an Administrative Rule change so that college savings programs are not considered a child's asset, for TANF purposes.

**Other Information/Updates:** Information was provided on the upcoming 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Outreach and Enrollment State Partnership Summit sponsored by the Community Healthcare Association of the Dakotas (CHAD). The event is scheduled for November 5 in Bismarck: [http://www.communityhealthcare.net/events/event\\_details.asp?id=504022](http://www.communityhealthcare.net/events/event_details.asp?id=504022).

Time did not permit review of the NDESPA Strategic Plan – this will be the first agenda item for the next meeting that is scheduled for Monday, November 17, 2014 from 8:30 a.m. – noon at the Consensus Council office.

There was agreement reached that all are succumbing to campaign fatigue and will be glad to have the mid-term election behind us. With that, the meeting was adjourned by consensus of the group.

***NDESPA Mission:*** *The North Dakota Economic Security & Prosperity Alliance works to build and sustain a system of economic security for all through poverty awareness and education, grassroots and community capacity building, research and data development, and promotion of policies and practices to eliminate disparities and obstacles for achieving economic security.*